

terized by a disorder of feeling and thinking and a consequent disturbance of the patient's relations to the outer

world. It is this state which insulin gives great promise of remedying.

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MEDICINE

## Sudden Deaths of Mothers Is Price Paid for Less Pain

### Deep Amnesia and Analgesia Give Relief But Result In Later Bleeding and Shock With Drugging of Baby

**T**HE PAINS of childbirth—are they to be bravely endured or humanely prevented?

This question, perennial in medical circles and among childbearing women, claims the leading position in a current issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (May 15).

Dr. Thaddeus L. Montgomery of Philadelphia reports a five-year study of the number and nature of anesthetic deaths made from the records of the maternal welfare committee of the Philadelphia County Medical Society.

Except for the deaths that occur during labor or within twenty-four hours afterward, the maternal death rate has gone steadily down during the five-year period.

But the physician's share in responsibility for sudden death in and after labor has increased more than 100 per cent., Dr. Montgomery finds. Mistakes in judgment and errors in technique account for this, he believes.

"Apparently something is wrong with methods and management in labor," Dr. Montgomery declares, "and, saddest to relate, whatever is wrong is going more astray with each succeeding year."

#### Deep Amnesia Blamed

Deep amnesia and deep analgesia—the method used for lessening the pangs of childbirth—are responsible for this bad showing of current obstetric practice, this doctor finds after reviewing some 155,000 cases of live births, 1,096 of which resulted in the death of the mother.

Women must be prepared to accept a moderate and safe degree of analgesia. If they will accept this, they will pass through delivery in better condition than the mother who is "drugged to an unconscious state and whose labor becomes a blank chapter in her life," this obstetrician states.

"The accoucheur seems often so bent on getting his patient asleep and her

baby delivered that he gives little thought to the outcome of his hasty procedures," Dr. Montgomery charges.

When the birth of the child is accomplished, he is abruptly confronted with results. The analgesic agent that gave the mother such profound rest has narcotized the baby.

The material that brought the mother forgetfulness of her experience combines with the third stage bleeding to produce obstetric shock.

The anesthetic that made operative delivery convenient has relaxed the uterus and caused bleeding.

The situation then calls for real generalship, and if it is not forthcoming, the mother dies.

What answer shall the doctor give the prospective mother who wants first to know whether the pangs of labor will be eliminated?

This is what Dr. Montgomery would tell her:

1. That he sympathizes with her desire for relief and is familiar with and uses in every labor various methods of attaining that end.

2. That he must select at the time of labor the drugs that seem best adapted to her condition, as what is best for Mrs. Smith is not always best for Mrs. Jones.

3. That her safety and the safety of the child are paramount issues and that with these thoughts uppermost she will be attended closely during the critical period of labor.

On the basis of this study, spinal anesthesia is condemned as a method of obstetric practice. Furthermore, Dr. Montgomery finds that the use of barbituric acid derivatives are not as free of danger as many reports would indicate.

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Balloons first proved useful in war in 1794, when a French officer gave signals from the air and thus helped win a victory over the Austrians.



MASTS

Towering to a height of 130 feet are these giant wooden masts which will support antenna for the improved trans-Atlantic radio communication. Workmen on the poles at Riverhead, Long Island, give a size comparison. The masts were shipped as deck cargo by steamer from the West Coast.

ARCHAEOLOGY

### No Secret to Pyramids Says German Professor

**N**O USE trying to read mystic secrets from Egypt's pyramids by numerology or any other theories.

The pyramids have no secret, is the emphatic view of a German Egyptologist, Dr. Georg Steindorff, professor emeritus of Egyptology, University of Leipzig, who is giving a series of lectures at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

Egypt's pyramids were simply royal tombs, and evolution of the pyramid form from flat-topped tombs is well understood, Dr. Steindorff explained. Yet popular notions persist that the pyramids had mathematical or astronomical significance. The most popular theory, the German Egyptologist said, assumes that the Egyptians knew the relation of the circle to its circumference, that is, the value of pi. However, they had no such knowledge in the pyramid era.

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